

**Interagency Wildfire Management Team
Meeting Notes
February 22, 2006**

Doug Tucker (Los Alamos County Fire Department) reported that the local fire danger is high to very high, and this is highly unusual for this time of year. In response to this threat, the County is considering the restrictions of selected ignition sources, such as campfires and open burning. These restrictions could go into effect as early as March.

Marla Rodgers (Bandelier National Monument) announced that the Santa Fe Zone is requesting severity funding based on the current elevated fire conditions within the Zone. Marla also distributed the Energy Release Component data for Bandelier. The ERC is currently at levels similar to the time period of the Cerro Grande Fire in 2000. This represents wildfire risks that are more than two months ahead of the 2000 wildfire season.

Gene Darling (Emergency Management and Response, LANL) has anticipated the potential lack of significant precipitation before the beginning of March. In this event, helicopter support will be obtained by March 15.

Phil Taylor (Los Alamos County Emergency Management) distributed a critique of the emergency response to hurricane Katrina. The report made several recommendations including 1) the strengthening of emergency management capabilities at State and local levels, and 2) continued catastrophic planning and improving leadership and management of disasters at all levels of government.

Sam Loftin (Ecology Group, LANL) announced that the East Jemez Resource Council meeting will be held tomorrow at the Ecology Group Conference Room. The meeting will include presentations on the Valle Toledo prescribed burn and the trail system at LANL.

Randy Balice (Emergency Operations Office, Institutional Services, LANL), Sam Loftin and Leonard Sandoval are maintaining the personnel capabilities for the wildfire behavior modeling at the Emergency Operations Center.

Sandy Hurlocker (Santa Fe National Forest) is the acting Española District Ranger. For the near term, Claudia Standish will be the point of contact with the IWMT.

Manny L'Esperance (Emergency Management and Response, LANL) is continuing to mitigate slash piles and other fuels accumulations, as well as upgrading the fire roads and fire breaks at LANL. The Emergency Operations Center will also conduct a communications drill, in collaboration with the Forest Service.

Claudia Standish (Santa Fe National Forest) is establishing a 1-800 phone number to alert the public to fire hazard conditions that exist during the fire season. Claudia is also

developing vehicle placards and other public relations devices that would be used during times of high fire hazards.

The Climate Assessment for the Southwest project (CLIMAS), located at the Institute for the Study of Planet Earth, University of Arizona, reports through its February 2006 Outlook that drought is likely to persist over much of the Southwest. The abundant grass crop produced last winter has cured into fine dry fuel, raising the prospect of an early start to a very active fire season. Experts predict increased chances of warmer-than-average temperatures and below average precipitation through May 2006. For more information, see <http://www.ispe.arizona.edu/climas/forecasts.html>

The next IWMT meeting will be at 9:30 AM on Wednesday, March 8, at the EOC (TA-69, Building 33) in the Fire TAC Room (124). The IWMT meets every other week and these meetings are open to the public. Contact Randy Balice (balice@lanl.gov, 665-1270) for further information, or to get on the distribution list for these meeting notes.